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CONSTRUCTION OF LARGE RESERVOIR IN C. ASIA

FERGHANA, UZBEK SSR. Construction of the Orto-Tokoi Reservoir in this republic, which was interrupted by the war, has now been resumed. When completed this reservoir on the Kassan-Sai River not far from the frontier between Uzbekistan and Kirghizia will be capable of accumulating five times the 30,000,000 cubic meters of water it can now hold. This will make it possible to open up 20,000 more hectares (50,000 acres) of land to farming in Ferghana Valley.

Every irrigated acre of land in this valley is highly prized. The soil here is

extremely fertile. Cotton and rice give exceptionally high yields, and silk worms reach maturity in three or four years. Ferghana grape rate among the best grown in the Soviet Union. Alfalfa, the "nitrogen collector," rotated here with cotton to maintain soil fertility is cut five times a year.

Ferghana Valley owes its fertility to the new irrigation system built up in Soviet times particularly the 300-odd-km. Great Ferghana Canal on the Syr-Darya River. This is one of the biggest irrigation systems in the world. Built shortly before the war, it converted many tens of thousands of desert acres, into fertile farmland. Before the Revolution construction of such complex irrigation systems was beyond the powers of the Uzbek peasantry.

The Ferghana Canal alone, however, cannot water the entire valley. The Uzbeks hence turned to their small rivers with a view to tapping them more rationally than heretofore. One of their numerous efforts in this direction is the Orto-Tokoi Reservoir, which will accumulate the spring and autumn floodwaters of the Kassan Sai that sweep past the fields uselessly and release them in the dry summer months when they are needed for irrigation.

Now nearing completion in the Orto-Tokoi Mountains are the final preparations for a blasting operation to remove 200,000 cubic meters of rock, which will speed up the work. The operation has been calculated to shift half this amount lying on the huge dam site.

Construction of the dam involves the investment of considerable funds and effort since the ground here is rocky. With thousands of collective farmers, who are

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interested in the speediest completion of the job, lending the builders a helping hand and the work proceeding day and night, the dam is rapidly taking shape. It is already 30 meters high, half the projected figure.

Formerly such engineering jobs were likewise beyond the powers of the Central Asian peasants, whose only tools were the pick and shovel. Today many similar projects, are being realized. One is a reservoir, also known as the Orto-Tokoi but more imposing, that is now building on the Chu--River in the neighboring Union republic of Kirghizia.

The Chu Valley is practically as famed as the Ferghana. And their destinies are likewise similar. Today, thanks to the irrigation system built up there is Soviet times this has become one of the richest farming areas in the republic.

Twenty years ago few would have believed anything could grow on these arid plains. Today it has thriving sugar beet plantations, kenaf fields and orchards, totaling 45,000 hectares (112,000 acres). At that time there also was no city of Kant, which now has become the center of Kirghizia's young sugar industry. All this came into being during the period of the Stalin five-year plan when irrigation canals were dug and a dam built at Chumysh Cliff thanks to which the level of the Chu River was raised and its waters channeled into the adjacent steppe to irrigate 112,000 acres of land.

Irrigation development in Kirghizia, which was likewise interrupted by the war, has also been resumed on a big scale. Along with the Orto-Tokoi Reservoir in this Republic, which will have a capacity of about 500,000,000 cubic meters of water. Two branches of the Great Chu Canal totaling 295 km. in length are being built, as a result of which the irrigated area will be doubled and then trebled.

The Chu is now being spanned by a dam 340 meters long and 54 meters high. To withstand the pressure of the swift current and possible earthquakes in this area, the base of the dam is being made more than half a kilometer wide and will gradually taper off to a width of 15 meters on top.